

HOUSE BILL 1765

By Brooks H

AN ACT to amend Tennessee Code Annotated, Title 49
and Title 68, relative to school safety drills.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE:

SECTION 1. Tennessee Code Annotated, Title 49, Chapter 6, is amended by adding the following language as a new part:

49-6-2501.

(a) It is the duty of the commissioner of commerce and insurance, or the commissioner's deputies and assistants, to require fire drills in educational and institutional occupancies.

(b) Fire drills requiring full evacuation in educational occupancies where such occupancies constitute the major occupancy of a building shall be held at least one (1) time every thirty (30) school days, with two (2) fire drills occurring during the first thirty (30) full days of the school year. Additionally, four (4) fire safety educational announcements will be conducted throughout the year. The LEA will develop the content of the educational announcements. Fire drills requiring full evacuation shall be held at least once every two (2) months in institutional occupancies where such occupancies constitute the major occupancy of a building. A record of all fire drills, including the time and date, shall be kept in the respective school or institutional offices and shall be made available upon request to the state fire marshal, or the state fire marshal's deputies or assistants, for inspection and review.

(c) In educational occupancies, fire drills shall include complete evacuation of all persons from the building. In institutional occupancies, fire drills shall be conducted to familiarize operating personnel with their assigned position of emergency duty.

Complete evacuation of occupants from the building at the time of the fire drill shall be required only where it is practicable and does not involve moving or disturbing persons under medical care.

(d) The state fire marshal, or the state fire marshal's deputies and assistants, shall avail themselves for the training of owners, tenants, or their employees in methods of fire drills to ensure the efficient and safe use of exit facilities in buildings and to prevent panic and in the coordination of the drills with fire alarm systems.

(e) All doors serving as an exit shall be kept unlocked during the periods that a building is occupied.

(f) In addition to the fire drills required by this section in educational occupancies, safety drills not requiring full evacuation of all persons from the building shall be conducted at least three (3) times during each school year. A record of all safety drills, including the time and date, shall be kept in the respective school offices and shall be made available upon request to the state fire marshal, or the state fire marshal's deputies or assistants, for inspection and review.

(g) It is unlawful for any teacher to keep the doors or windows of the school building locked while the pupils are assembled in the school or to permit any screens to be fastened in windows of the building that would prevent the egress of pupils in case of fire or other emergency.

49-6-2502.

(a) The state board of education shall promulgate, in accordance with the Uniform Administrative Procedures Act, compiled in title 4, chapter 5, rules requiring each LEA that has a jurisdiction that lies entirely or partially within one hundred (100) miles of the New Madrid fault line to implement earthquake preparedness drills in each of the schools administered by that LEA. In developing the rules, the board shall consult and collaborate with the Tennessee emergency management agency and the state fire marshal. The rules shall include a model plan for earthquake preparedness drills in

schools, and the model plan shall be suitable for adoption or modification by affected LEAs.

(b) The drills shall be conducted at least twice every school year. A record of all earthquake preparedness drills, including the time and date, shall be kept in the respective schools and shall be made available for review upon request by the board.

SECTION 2. Tennessee Code Annotated, Section 68-102-137, is amended by deleting the section in its entirety.

SECTION 3. Tennessee Code Annotated, Section 49-5-201(b), is amended by deleting the subsection in its entirety.

SECTION 4. Tennessee Code Annotated, Section 49-1-302(a)(16), is amended by deleting the subdivision in its entirety.

SECTION 5. This act shall take effect upon becoming a law, the public welfare requiring it.